

Congressman Nadler Introduces Legislation to Aid Families of Lost Public Safety Officers

Wednesday, 12 September 2001

WASHINGTON -- Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), who represents the area of lower Manhattan destroyed this week, today introduced legislation which would expedite the process for payment of a Federal benefit to the families of public safety officers who were lost in the line of duty, in relation to Tuesday's attack on America. Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY) is introducing similar legislation in the Senate. Rep. Nadler's statement, as well as the text of the legislation, is below.

STATEMENT FOR REP. NADLER

ON PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS BENEFIT BILL

Mr. Speaker,

I have just returned from spending time with my fellow New Yorkers, in this dark hour, to introduce this legislation. It is legislation I take no pride in introducing, and if there ever was a bill I drafted that I wish was not needed, this would be it.

Like so many Americans, I wait to hear from friends and colleagues who were in lower Manhattan when tragedy struck early Tuesday morning. With each passing hour, my hope wanes and I cannot help but feel more and more empty inside.

But through all of this death and destruction, there are some glimmers of hope. All across the country, men, women, and children are coming together to volunteer their services, to donate supplies, and to donate their blood. Even more moving are the numerous accounts witnesses have relayed of the heroic and fearless actions of the region's fire fighters and police officers as they rushed up to the inferno that the World Trade Center had become, as thousands of civilians rushed out. Putting the safety and well-being of others well above their own, public safety officers performed the most courageous act, but, sadly, many paid the ultimate price for their heroism.

According to the International Association of Fire Fighters, more public safety officers were lost in the attack on the United States yesterday than any other single event in modern history.

When a public safety officers dies in the line of duty, his or her family receives a one-time benefit payment. However, the paperwork involved is often long, arduous and time-consuming.

Just as our public safety officers stand up for us, now, we must stand up for them. This legislation directs the Department of Justice to expedite the payment process for the families of those affected by Tuesday's events. Expediting assistance is one small way we can help families cope with this tragic loss and take advantage of this important benefit without undue burden or delays. Of course, much more needs to be done in response to yesterday's events, and I stand ready to work with all of my colleagues to address this crisis in a timely and comprehensive manner.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this legislation.

TEXT OF LEGISLATION TO EXPEDITE PROCESS OF PAYMENT
TO PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS

107th Congress

1st Session

H.R. 2882

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Nadler (for himself, COSPONSORS TO BE ADDED) introduced the following bill...

A BILL

To provide for the expedited payment of certain benefits for a public safety officer who was killed or suffered a catastrophic injury as a direct and proximate result of a personal injury sustained in the line of duty in connection with the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. EXPEDITED PAYMENT FOR HEROIC PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS.

Notwithstanding the limitations of subsection (b) of section 1201 or the provisions of subsections (c), (d), and (e) of such section or section 1202 of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796, 3796a), upon certification by a public agency that a public safety officer employed by such agency was killed or suffered a catastrophic injury as a direct and proximate result of a personal injury sustained in the line of duty as described in section 1201(a) of such Act in connection with the rescue or recovery efforts related to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the Director of the Bureau of Justice Assistance shall pay to qualified beneficiaries, not later than 30 days after receipt of such certification, benefits described under subpart 1 of part L of such Act (42 U.S.C. 3796 et seq.).

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

For purposes of this Act, the terms ``catastrophic injury'', ``public agency'', and ``public safety officer'' have the same meanings given such terms in section 1204 of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42

U.S.C.

3796b).

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